

MA THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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PRESS RELEASE

OPERA PHANTOM'S PARIS HOME THE TOPIC OF LECTURE AT THE ART MUSEUM

"The ghost's vast domain, the huge building which he had made his kingdom"--so Gaston Leroux described the nineteenth-century Paris Opera House which is the setting of his 1911 novel, The Phantom of the Opera. Helen Borowitz, Associate Curator of Education at The Cleveland Museum of Art, will employ slides and music to recount the long, troubled construction of the great Neo-Baroque building and its use in Leroux's book in a lecture on Wednesday, April 13, at 2:15 pm, to be repeated Sunday, April 17 at 3:00 pm, at the Museum.

Conceived by Napoleon III as the opera house to outshine all others, the Paris Opera House was designed by Charles Garnier and built between 1861 and 1874. Surviving innumerable construction disasters--including a lake in the lowest of its five basements--and scandal surrounding the controversial nude figures by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux flanking its doors, the Opera House became the social center of Paris.

Leroux's fictional adventure of a journalist investigating the house's most famous crime of passion has inspired several films--including the legendary 1925 horror film starring Lon Chaney--and a current musical by British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber which has attracted an unrivalled \$18 million in advance tickets sales on Broadway. Mrs. Borowitz will compare the adaptations of Leroux's story by writers, lyricists, and filmmakers. She will also talk about Marc Chagall's repainting of the ceiling in 1963-64, and discuss such Parisian painters as Edgar Degas and Edouard Manet, whose subjects included the performers and patrons of the house.

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